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Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 25 August 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

I have the honour to address you, in your capacity as Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, regarding the note verbale dated 25 August 2000 and enclosed herewith (see annex), sent by the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations to the United States Mission to the United Nations, on 25 August 2000. I also request your good offices in the circulation of the above-mentioned note verbale as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country as soon as possible.

I also have the honour to request that a meeting of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country be held urgently in order to consider the issue contained in the above-mentioned note verbale. While I request your good offices in the solution of this issue, may I suggest that the meeting be convened for next Monday, 28 August, in the afternoon or Tuesday, 29 August, in the morning.

(*Signed*) Bruno **Rodríguez Parrilla**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 25 August 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United States Mission to the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the decision by the authorities of the host country to deny the President of the National Assembly of the People's Power of the Republic of Cuba and the other members of the delegation entry visas in order to attend the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, which is to take place from 30 August to 1 September 2000, at United Nations Headquarters, in conjunction with the Millennium Summit, convened by the United Nations in cooperation with governmental organizations and other international actors. The authorities of the host country informed the Permanent Mission of Cuba of the decision in question by telephone this afternoon. The odd excuse used was that the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments is "a private meeting which is not covered by the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations".

All visa-application procedures were carried out in accordance with the procedures established by the authorities of the host country.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba wishes to make a strong protest at that denial of entry visas and to express its absolute disagreement with the excuses put forward; it hopes that the denial in question will be reconsidered.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations wishes to reiterate to the host country authorities that the Republic of Cuba and all Member States attach special importance to the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments to be held at United Nations Headquarters.

The Republic of Cuba fully endorses the founding principle of the Inter-Parliamentary Union that confers on it the status of an international organization of a universal character, which means that it can meet only if all members and observers have been invited and assurances have been given about the issuance of their visas. The Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments will begin in four days.

This event will take place in implementation of various General Assembly resolutions concerning cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which has increased year by year since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 36/38 of 18 November 1981.

In that connection, the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations would like to refer to some of the most recent resolutions adopted by consensus by the General Assembly regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Pursuant to resolution 50/15 of 15 November 1995, Member States gave the Secretary-General the mandate to conclude an agreement on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which was eventually signed on 24 July 1996. Similarly, in resolution 51/7 of 25 October 1996, Member States welcomed the conclusion of such agreement and considered that its signature would constitute a great step towards increased and strengthened cooperation between the two organizations.

The United Nations has continued to strengthen cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union ever since. Resolution 52/7 of 28 October 1997 especially recommended that such cooperation should continue to be strengthened at a time when the United Nations was preparing to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Likewise, the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations would like to recall for the benefit of the United States Mission to the United Nations the well-known background to the convening of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments at United Nations Headquarters, which is organized jointly by the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Resolution 53/13, adopted by consensus on 28 October 1998, states the following in its operative paragraph 2: "Welcomes the initiative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union of holding a conference of presiding officers of national parliaments at United Nations Headquarters, in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly in 2000 proposed by the Secretary-General".

Resolution 54/12 of 27 October 1999, also adopted by consensus, states the following in its operative paragraph 2: "Also welcomes the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General regarding preparations made with his support by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to hold a conference of presiding officers of national parliaments in conjunction with the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, designated the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, in the General Assembly Hall from 30 August to 1 September 2000".

Moreover, the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 54/281 of 15 August 2000, invited representatives of the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments to participate in the plenary meetings of the Millennium Summit, and authorized their inclusion in the list of speakers for the plenary meetings of the Summit, in accordance with resolution 54/261 of 10 May 2000.

The programme organized by the United Nations Secretariat for the participants in the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, includes, inter alia, the statement by the Secretary-General before the plenary of the Conference and an official reception offered by the Secretary-General. In addition, the documentation issued for the holding of this event indicates clearly that it is an official event co-sponsored by the United Nations.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations hopes that the principles and purposes that inspire the Millennium Summit and the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments connected with it, will prevail, and that the authorities of the host country will fulfil their international obligations as the venue for the United Nations, including those established by the letter and spirit of the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations.